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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0744
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2427
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0845
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2837
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2222
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000199

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/28/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO KYRGYZSTAN
FOCUSES ON ECONOMIC ISSUES

REF: 07 BISHKEK 1048

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Classified By: DCM Lee Litzenberger, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Iranian FM Mottaki paid an official visit to Kyrgyzstan February 21-22, and met with President Bakiyev, PM Chudinov, Speaker of Parliament Madumarov, FM Karabayev, and Finance Minister Kalimbetova. Discussions included the expansion of economic and commercial ties, Iran's nuclear program, and Afghanistan's narcotics production. A banking cooperation agreement was signed, paving the way for establishment of Iranian bank offices in Bishkek. The Kyrgyz MFA told us that the meetings focused mainly on economic and trade issues. Concerning Iran's nuclear program, the MFA pointed to PM Chudinov's public statement that Iran should work cooperatively with the IAEA and the UN. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki paid a two-day official visit to Kyrgyzstan February 21-22. He met with President Bakiyev, Prime Minister Igor Chudinov, Speaker of Parliament Adahan Madumarov, Foreign Minister Ednan Karabayev, and Finance Minister Tajikan Kalimbetova (who also chairs the Kyrgyz-Iranian Joint Economic Commission). The visit followed Iranian President Ahmadinejad's participation at the August 2007 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Bishkek and an exchange of parliamentary delegations last year (reftel).

¶3. (SBU) According to press reports, Mottaki's visit focused mainly on economic and trade relations, but did include discussions on narco-trafficking out of Afghanistan and Iran's nuclear power production. PM Chudinov noted the work of Iranian companies on projects in Kyrgyzstan, and he called for continued cooperation through the the Kyrgyz-Iranian inter-governmental commission. Chudinov and Mottaki also expressed concern about increasing narcotics production in Afghanistan, calling it a serious threat to Central Asian

security. Chudinov finally welcomed Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as its participation as "observer" in the SCO.

14. (SBU) Mottaki said that Iran intends to expand bilateral relations with Kyrgyzstan. He also signaled Iran's willingness to open an Iranian automobile (Saipa) manufacturing plant in Kyrgyzstan, and hoped that both countries could introduce a "mixed tourism" scheme. He further discussed with FM Karabayev the possibility of establishing new air routes between both countries. Mottaki and Finance Minister Kalimbetova signed a banking cooperation agreement, under the auspices of the Kyrgyz-Iranian Joint Economic Commission, to establish Iranian bank offices in Bishkek, through which Iran would issue a 50 million Euro line-of-credit for future Iranian investments.

15. (C) MFA Eastern Countries Division's Iran Specialist, Turdukon Sydykov told Poloff that Mottaki's meetings focused mainly on the development of economic and trade relations. Sydykov, who attended each meeting, emphasized his government's intention to develop such relations with all countries, and that Kyrgyzstan would continue to work productively with other members of the Tehran-based Economic Cooperation Organization. He also said that, as the last foreign ministerial meeting took place in 2003, it was time to "re-connect" with Iran. Sydykov reiterated PM Chudinov's public statements regarding Iran's need to work diplomatically with the IAEA and UN regarding its nuclear production program, confiding that the issue was not discussed at length.

Comment

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16. (C) The Kyrgyz have been cautious toward Iranian overtures in the past, and they turned down a request last year for a state visit for Ahmadinejad. Nevertheless, the Kyrgyz are anxious to develop economic and trade relations in all directions, and the promise of a 50 million Euro credit line will get their attention. On the security side, local press have previously ginned up stories that the Coalition Airbase at Manas might be used in an attack against Iran. For this visit, the Manas Airbase was not mentioned in the public statements about the trip, nor did the local press play up the Base angle.
YOVANOVITCH